

# CHAOTIC DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON CITY CHARACTER

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Department of Architecture of the  
University of Moratuwa in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science



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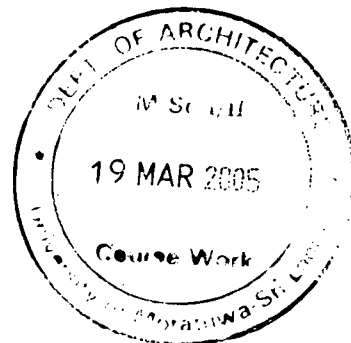
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March 2005



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## DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation represent my own work except where due acknowledgment is made, and that it has not been previously included in a thesis, dissertation or report submitted to this university to any other institution for degree diploma or other qualification

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## CHAOTIC DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON CITY CHARACTER

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## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

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## ABSTRACT

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The cities have a unique character like a person have his or her own identity

But due to the lots of contemporary development trends which make the cities look more characterless loosing its identity make more uncomfortable to the physical attributes and the functional aspects as well and identifying the stress imposed to the city and its components is a realistic approach. To curb this haphazardness it is advisable to identify the actual impact towards the whole city structure and its character after the post development trends.

The development trends have to be implemented in a very effective manner in order to see the city have the physical and functional activities more well arranged in the future in order to have the society keeping it's original architectural characteristic while giving away lots of means and ways to the development trends which will be taken place in the future.



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## INTRODUCTION

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Architecture is the art and science of creating built environment. Built environment can be defined as physical surrounding and condition affecting people psychologically and physically. Therefore architecture by shaping the built environment also simulates the mind of the people. It is matter of creating spaces and places for their existence. Creation of spaces and places enhance the psychological and physical comfort of man. Architecture helps to enhance the verity, visual sensation and harmony of the visual environment. By providing these constituents architecture enhances the character, identity of a place or a city. Therefore, one has to consider the above factors when designing or being involved in design intervention in a city.

“When we are dealing with cities, we are dealing with life at its most complex and intense form” (Jacobs J. 1965:61)

Cities have today become a focal point for ever increasing communication between societies providing opportunity for social interaction but for economic and spatial co-relationship. One is the city character. If a city is designed properly it will have a unique character and its own identity. It enhance it beauty and harmony and will be a spectacular sight to an onlooker. It is helpful in directing one to an anticipated aim without confusion by providing an identity.

“Character is often so strong that, it in fact, determines the basic properties of the environmental images of most people present, making them feel that they belong to the same place”

(Schultz 1971:72)

Therefore maintaining the character of a place is vital importance but when the character is altered, destroyed or removed from a place; the essential bond between the place and its

people is subjected to be broken, resulting in a subsequent diminution of the equality of life of its people.

Character is important to understand and recognize the nature of urban life in the form of relationship that are weaved within the city spaces, thus provide the ground for social spaces for its heterogeneous society.

### **01: Need of the study**

Different people define architecture in numerous ways. It plays a vital role in the visual environment and it mainly deals with human beings. Therefore, there has to be a well balanced and harmonic relationship between man and his place. In order to create environment that is full of harmony, variety & visual sensation one must understand spatial experience of beholder. Schultz (1971) describes spatial experience of man as primitive, perceptual, existential and architectural space. Among these spatial experiences, primitive, perceptual and existential spaces are psychological concepts that have been used by man to interact with the environment. This awareness of space helps to man to realise his mental image. Mental images of the people identify the composition of architectural forms and spaces and their movement and attribution enhance the harmony and verity of the particular composition. It helps to create up mental image of a person.

Composition of a particular product communicates and expresses its character. Expression is very important in architecture because it can lead or mislead the beholder.

“A City, It is the grip of man upon nature. It is human aspiration directed against nature a human organism both for protection and work. It is a creation”  
( Corbusier, 1978:21 )

“A City” what does it imply? Vastly varying images of life in a city are “conjured up” and intense experiences of human activity, filled with noise, traffic and people. The life in the city is both stimulating and stressful; with high impact and concentration of events, life experiences, enfolded with in the build environment. The concept of its urban environment

acts between the contents of its physical environment and the life which within. It is characterized by its stimulating atmosphere that in general, it provides a variety of choices and life styles for its people.

Today as a developing third world country in particular Sri Lanka has been in a phenomenal increase in urban growth. In Sri Lanka this has been in a such away that it will tarnish the once majestically symbolised its character. The city centre is flooded by unchecked urban growth and inherent built form. This has produced strange images, which have been slowly weaving them selves in to the existing urban fabric and producing fragmented random illegible urban structures. Mostly in a given cityscape buildings are treated as isolated objects on landscape and not as a part of a large fabric. Therefore our cities makes a visually, disturbed, disorder and Chaotic growth. Decisions about growth patterns are made without considering the three-dimensional relationship between buildings, spaces and without a real understanding of city character and human image.

“Analysing the town from and its major generators is one of the initial steps in the town design for every new built form. Every new space created of that particular town”  
(Lynch K, 1979, p46)

Sri Lankan cities have a particular character when it is started to evolve since the very early stage. Therefore maintaining the character of a place is vital importance because its make image of the city. When the character is altered, destroyed or removed from a place; the essential bond between the place and its people is subjected to be broken. There for it is vital important to understand and keep the image of the city. Which depicts the true character of it's evolution and inheritance.

## **02: Aims and Objectives**

The evolution of a cityscape in the ancient period starting from the inner city or citadel to the neighbouring parts has a unique and identical and orderly manner before and during 1800's and up to 19<sup>th</sup> century time period but due to rapid expansion of population and over

come of modern science and technology the development of a cityscape has taken various norms and forms where it has mostly gone through a lot of changes which ultimately ended up tarnishing the overall image and the original architectural character of that relevant city causing massive changes thus leading to so many contemporary development trends. Most of them was ad-hog pattern.

Therefore the study is attempted to identify the causes of chaotic development in present cities and such a development rapidly destroyed indigenous city character. There fore main objective of this study is finding how to effect chaotic development to city character.

The study will establish theoretical perspective which helps to recognize the character of city and the way of dissolve character due to chaotic situation.

City character is not only single sense; it is combination of city composition, texture, and stance. Study further reviled the quality of that component.

Third chapter will discussed particular Sri Lankan cities which have strong character and later part reveal the impact due to chaotic development in above cities.

Finally it will be concluded with finding solutions for preventing chaotic situation in Sri Lankan cities.

### **03: Scope and limitation**

The discussion and examples will be not in a generalize manner with some examples to give the broader idea of the development trends by detailing unique character of the selected cities due to its historical and architectural significances.

The study will be looking in to the chaotic situation impact in city character due to rapid urban development through points of views of architecture initially and then relating it to the significance of the selected cities.

There will be three case studies of different cities that of Kandy, the hill capital with historical significant with being unique Kandyan style architecture. Temple of the tooth as a cynosure and Kurunegala an inter located city between hill and low land country scuttle with the nature governed by big rock "Athugala"



Therefore the limitations are primarily based on the historical and architectural significant and attending the over all composition from that of node, paths landmarks and junctions and how it was related to the hierarchical pattern of its existence as well as violating the existed composition, stance and texture of the given cities.

#### **04: Method of Study:**

It will focus on how chaotic situation came in to existence and how it impacts the nature of the city's diversification and functional approach and the manner in which it existed, the future expansion would be and the ways and means of mitigation its effect.

Definition of responsible factors were identified by means of a literature survey and the formulation of a theoretical framework to get to causes that led to the destruction of its character the primary data will be collected from the dwellers from the city rather than indigenous people in that city while supporting that with secondary data to have the major abstract form of the city and fact finding mission of recent trends that lead to the destruction or rather changing the physical and functional character of the city.